

Message Text

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60/46

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01

ACDA-05 SAJ-01 SAM-01 AID-05 OC-05 CCO-00 A-01 OPR-02

SY-05 /105 W

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O 061851Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6920

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 05392

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR GARBLES THROUGHOUT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR AG MO SP SS

SUBJECT: MOROCCAN/ALGERIAN RELATIONS

1. GROWING MOROCCAN HOSTILITY. THE RECENT STIFFENING OF ALGERIAN STAND ON SAHARA, WHILE ONLY ONE ASPECT OF CURRENT SAHARA CRISIS, HAVING ITS EFFECT HERE. PRINCIPAL TARGET OF MORCCAN ANTAGONISM FOR MOMENT IS ALGERIA. REPORTED CLASHES IN SAHARA, KING'S WARNING TO ALGERIA AND F POLISARIO IN NOV 5 SPEECH, AND WIDELY HELD FACILE MOROCCAN CONVICTION THAT ALGERIA, WHICH SNATCHED SUCCESS FROM MOROCCAN HANDS IN RECENT NEGOTIATIONS WITH SPAIN, HAVE ALL SERVED TO CREATE HIGH FEELING OF BELLIGERENCY TOWARDS ALGERIANS AND TENDENCY TO FOCUS ON THEM AND "THEIR F POLISARIO LACKEYS" AS ROOT OF ALL PROBLEMS.

2. REPORTED CLASHES: WE CONSIDER IT PROBABLE THAT GOM PATROLS
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HAVE BEEN PENETRATING BORDER AREAS IN RECENT DAYS TO PROBE

DIMENSIONS OF SPANISH PULLBACK AND DETERMINE WHETHER OTHER ELEMENTS ARE PRESENT. SPANISH HERE DENY SPANISH FORCES HAVE CLASHED WITH MOROCCAN UNITS RECENTLY AND THEY BELIEVE THAT F POLISARIO UNITS PROBABLY RESPONSIBLE. ALGERIAN EMBASSY CONTACTS HERE CONTINUE TO DENY CATEGORICALLY ANY SUCH CLASHES INVOLVING ALGERIAN FORCES. INTENSITY OF REPORTED CLASHES UNKNOWN, BUT WE NOTE REPORTS OF SUCH CLASHES INSIDE SAHARA ON BOTH ALGERIAN AND MADRID RADIO BROADCASTS FOR PAST THREE DAYS AND F POLISARIO CLAIM IN NEW YORK (USUN 5693 NOTAL) THAT IT HAD "REPELLED" BORDER VIOLATIONS BY MOROCCAN ARMY. FOR ITS PART, GOM HIGHLY SENSITIVE TO REPORTING ON THIS SUBJECT AND THERE HAVE BEEN AT LEAST TWO SEIZURES OF ISSUES REPORTING RECENT CLASHES. MINFO BENHIMA ACKNOWLEDGED CLASHES HAD OCCURRED AT ONE POINT IN THE WEEK BUT NEXT DAY GOM ISSUED STATEMENT SAYING ITS FORCES NOT INVOLVED IN ANY CLASHES, THAT SAHARAN ELEMENTS PROBABLY SOURCE OF REPORTS.

3. SAHARA MARCH. ALGERIAN EMBOFF IN NOV 6 CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF GAVE IMPRESSION OF BEING CONTENT TO AWAIT CLARIFICATION OF KING'S INTENTIONS RE MARCH, WHICH JUST UNDERWAY THAT MORNING. SAID IF MARCH'S OBJECTIVES WERE LIMITED IT ONE THING; IF, HOWEVER, INTENTION WAS TO LEAVE LARGE BODY OF MARCHERS INSIDE SAHARA, THIS ANOTHER. ALGERIAN CLAIMED THAT MANY MARCHERS HAD BEEN PROMISED OPPORTUNITY TO REMAIN IN SAHARA AND HAD SOLD HOLDINGS IN THAT EXPECTATION. HE REFUSED TO SAY WHAT ALGERIA MIGHT DO IN LATTER CASE. HOWEVER, ALGERIAN MILATT TOLD DCM NOV 4 THAT ALGERIA WOULD FIGHT TO MAINTAIN INTEGRITY OF ITS FRONTIERS BUT WOULD NOT ATTACK MOROCCO. EGYPTIAN EMBASSY SOURCE SAID NOV 4 THAT ALGERIANS HAD TOLD HIM ESSENTIALLY THE SAME THING.

4. ALGERIAN EMBOFF ALSO TOLD EMBOFF THAT BAHNINI VISIT ARRANGED AT LAST MOMENT, ON VERY SHORT NOTICE. HE AVOIDED CHARACTERIZATION OF VISIT, BUT ALLUDED TO PORTION OF BAHNINI'S DEPARTURE STATEMENT WHPIH MENTIONED DIFFERENCES OF VIEW BETWEEN PARTIES.

5. COMMENT: ALGERIANS WILL PROBABLY NOT DECIDE HOW TO REACT UNTIL GOM'S PLANS FOR MARCH BECOME CLEARER. THE DANGER OF ESCALATION RESULTING FROM CLASHES -- INADVERTENT OR
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OTHERWISE -- BETWEEN GOM AND F POLISARIO FORCES STRIKES US AS BEING A SERIOUS THREAT AT THE MOMENT.
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